SPIDER-MAN® UNMASKED

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AGUIRRE-SACASA
MEDINA
HANNA
KEMP

The Sensational SPIDER-MAN®

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THE HOME OF LIZ ALLAN.

BZZZZZZZZZZZ

AVENGERS TOWER.

CLICKK!

SWISSH!

"...IT'S SO HARD TO KNOW WHAT TO CALL ***YOU*** NOW."

YEAH, I REMEMBER...

YES, INDEEDY. YOUR UNCLE BEN USED TO SAY: "IF A MAN CAN'T ***TRUST*** HIS OWN NEIGHBORS...WELL, THEN, THERE'S NO ***HOPE*** LEFT FOR ANY OF US."

OF COURSE, THOSE WERE LESS ***DANGEROUS*** TIMES, WEREN'T THEY?

THAT'S RIGHT, HE ***DID***, DIDN'T HE?

...QUITE A ***CHANGE***, PETER, FROM WHEN WE DIDN'T EVEN ***BOTHER*** LOCKING OUR DOORS? BACK AT OUR OLD HOUSE?

LIZ, I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. IT FEELS LIKE IT'S BEEN ***YEARS***...

IT HAS, PETER. SPIDER-MAN. PETER. SORRY...

"LESS... ***CONFUSING.***"

IT'S ***PETER***, LIZ. I'LL ***ALWAYS*** BE PETER PARKER TO YOU, NO MATTER WHAT.

AND WHAT'S STRANGE IS... I'VE BEEN SITTING HERE, THINKING HOW YOU ***NEVER*** WERE. HOW YOU ***NEVER*** WERE THE REAL PETER PARKER TO ME, BACK IN HIGH SCHOOL... ALL THE YEARS SINCE...

ALL THE YEARS SINCE...

WE'LL GO TO THE LIVING ROOM; MARK SHOULD BE ***CALLING*** ANY MINUTE NOW.

ANY MESSAGES? ANY WORD FROM MARY JANE?

I'M JUST CHECKING NOW...

RRIPP!

...NOPE, NOT A SINGLE ONE, AUNT MAY.

I GUESS MY *FIFTEEN MINUTES* MUST BE UP.

OH, I WOULDN'T SAY *THAT*, PETER. EMILY POLLACK, WHO ORDERS ME MY *YARN* FOR KNITTING, TELLS ME THERE ARE *BOOKS*--WHOLE BOOKS!-- COMING OUT ABOUT YOU...

BY THE WAY, HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT *OATMEAL RAISIN?* I KNOW THEY'RE NOT YOUR FAVORITE, BUT I COULDN'T GET MY HANDS ON ANY CHOCOLATE CHIPS...

OATMEAL RAISIN *COOKIES*, AUNT MAY?

...

SURE, WHY NOT?

YOU'RE NOT WEARING YOUR COSTUME--

--WHY IS THAT?

NO, I AM, IT'S JUST THAT...

...MY NEW ONE'S KIND OF...*THOUGHT-CONTROLLED.* DO YOU WANT TO SEE?

NOT PARTICULARLY. IN FACT, AFTER TODAY, I PRAY I *NEVER* SEE SPIDER-MAN--

--OR YOU--

--AGAIN.

LIZ, PLEASE. I'M SO SORRY I--

LIED? DECEIVED ME? WILLFULLY *ENDANGERED* US?

MY GOD, PETER, HOW DID YOU EVEN *BECOME* SPIDER-MAN?

OR IS *THAT* SOME BIG, DIRTY SECRET, TOO?

WELL...THERE ARE *TWO* PREVAILING THEORIES:

THE FIRST IS THAT I'M THE LATEST IN A LONG LINE OF SPIDER-MEN CHOSEN BY *DESTINY.* (THAT'S THE "TOTEM" THEORY.) THE SECOND IS THAT I WAS BITTEN BY A RADIOACTIVE SPIDER AND ACQUIRED THE PROPORTIONATE STRENGTH AND SPEED OF A SPIDER. PERSONALLY, I THINK IT'S A COMBINATION OF THE...THE...

ARE YOU *TRYING* TO BE FUNNY? MY SON IS *MISSING,* BEING HELD *HOSTAGE* BY THE MOLTEN MAN--

--BECAUSE OF MY CONNECTION TO YOU--

--AND YOU'RE MAKING *JOKES?*

WHAT? LIZ, NO, I'M *NOT*--

--NOT AT *ALL.*

REALLY? BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT IT *FEELS* LIKE! THAT YOU'VE BEEN *SNICKERING* BEHIND MY *BACK* ALL THESE YEARS! THAT I'VE BEEN THE BUTT OF SOME TERRIBLE *ADOLESCENT* JOKE--

NO. I DIDN'T TELL YOU BECAUSE...I DIDN'T TELL ANYONE.

THINK BACK TO WHAT HIGH SCHOOL WAS LIKE FOR ME, LIZ. I WASN'T PRETENDING TO BE A WALLFLOWER, I WAS A WALLFLOWER. THINK ABOUT HOW FLASH TREATED ME! ON TOP OF WHICH, MY--

--MY UNCLE BEN DIED! I DIDN'T HAVE ANYONE BUT MY AUNT MAY!

YOU COULD'VE HAD ME! YOU COULD'VE TRUSTED ME!

AFTER GRADUATION, WHEN I TOLD YOU HOW I FELT ABOUT YOU--

GOD, LIZ, WHAT ARE WE ARGUING ABOUT HERE? WHEN WE WERE KIDS, ALL I WAS DOING WAS REACTING!

I'M SORRY YOU FEEL CHEATED OR DECEIVED, BUT I WAS TRYING MY BEST! TRYING TO PROTECT AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE! TO PRESERVE AS MANY LIVES AS POSSIBLE! TO SAVE INNOCENTS LIKE YOUR SON!

PETER...

I DIDN'T LET YOU IN BECAUSE I WAS TRYING TO SPARE YOU.

THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS I REGRET, LIZ, GOD KNOWS. BUT DOING EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE NO MATTER WHAT IT COSTS ME ISN'T ONE OF THEM.

I SWEAR... I'LL GET LITTLE NORMIE BACK FOR YOU.

MOM... MOMMY...

...MY HANDS WERE BURNING BUT I GOT THE ROPES OFF...

I PULLED AND PULLED AND GOT THEM OFF...

LIZZY?

PETER--

--THEY MADE ME DO IT. MADE ME LIE TO YOU.

WHAT--

--WHAT'S GOING ON?

KERRANG!

DAMMIT, LIZ!!!

MOLTEN MAN.

A set-up. And I walked *RIGHT* into it.

Since I unmasked, my spider-sense has been buzzing *CONSTANTLY.*

I'M SORRY, PETER, I DIDN'T--

--DIDN'T *WANT* TO--

GET NORMIE *OUT* OF HERE, LIZ!

EVERYTHING'S a threat now, and the real ones stand out LESS and LESS.

RAXTON, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU'RE ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS NOW! LIZ IS YOUR FAMILY!

DON'T YOU THINK I KNOW THAT? DON'T YOU THINK I--?

WHAM!

--STAND STILL!!

PETER!!! MARK--THE MOLTEN MAN--

--HE'S NOT ALONE!

NO, HE'S NOT.

GOING SOMEWHERE, WERE YOU?

LIZ?

THUDD!

UUUGHK!

MARK, FOR GOD'S SAKE, STOP!!!

DON'T MAKE THIS *HARDER*, LIZ.

AND DON'T FORGET ALL HE'S *DONE* TO YOU.

MOLTEN MAN...

YOU'RE A REAL PAIN IN MY--!

...

CLANK!

NICE ONE, PARKER. THAT *ALMOST* HURT.

Uh-*OH.*

NOW LET'S SEE IF I REMEMBER HOW THIS WORKS. MY SKIN KEEPS YOU FROM REALLY CONNECTING...

...BUT *I* CAN CLAMP ON YOU LIKE A *VISE.*

He's... *RIGHT.*

RAXTON...

...YOU DON'T HAVE TO *DO* THIS, MAN...

SHUT UP.

AND LET'S SEE IF I CAN'T *MELT* THROUGH YOUR NEW COSTUME.

YOU...YOU SAID YOU'D LET US GO ONCE I GOT HIM HERE. YOU SAID LI'L NORMIE AND I COULD WALK AWAY.

ACTUALLY... ***MOLTEN MAN*** MADE THAT PROMISE.

WE'VE GOT...*OTHER* INTENTIONS.

OH...?

...AND WHAT MIGHT *THOSE* BE?

BY THE WAY? I'M THE SPIDER'S *BACK-UP.*

AND ONE OF YOU *IDIOTS* LEFT A WINDOW OPEN UPSTAIRS.

PRETTY PLEASE, RAXTON...

=UHNNN=

...AT LEAST TELL ME WHAT YOU *WANT.*

DON'T... BLAME... ME...

IT'S NOT WHAT I WANT, IT'S...

...IT'S THE *CHAMELEON*, ALL RIGHT? I WAS OUT. *HE'S* THE ONE WHO WANTS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY DEAD. HE'S THE ONE WHO *DRAFTED* US.

"WHO SENT *SWARM* AFTER YOUR WIFE. SENT TWEEDLE-DEE AND TWEEDLE-*DUMBER* TO SOFTEN YOU UP."

REALLY? *FASCINATING.*

WHY... AREN'T... YOU...?

GIVING UP?

NOT MY STYLE!

GO AHEAD AND *GAS ME*, EBENEZER...

MY WORST FEAR...? I'VE ALREADY *SURVIVED* IT.

I'LL *DECLAW* THE KITTY, WISP. YOU MAKE CERTAIN RAXTON'S *CRUSHING* THE SPIDER.

ARE YOU SURE? I CAN JUST AS EASILY *BLIND* HER--

"DECLAW ME"? THE DAY A *CAT* CAN'T TEAR THE STUFFING OUT OF A *SCARECROW*--

I'M *HANDLING* THIS, WISP--AND *SPIDER-MAN'S* THE TARGET!

FINE, FINE--I'M *PHASING*--

MOLTEN MAN? HOW ARE THINGS *GOING* IN--?

SLAM

THWACK

I WENT AWAY AND CAME BACK, RAXTON.

BETTER. STRONGER.

YOU WERE RIGHT, SPIDER, THOSE NOSE...

...FILTERS...

ONE CHANCE--

--ONE CHANCE TO MAKE THIS RIGHT!

IF THIS REALLY *ISN'T* ABOUT YOU--

--IF THERE'S EVEN A *SHRED* OF GOODNESS LEFT INSIDE YOU--

--TELL ME WHERE THE CHAMELEON IS!

YOUR... YOUR *AUNT*...

...GOING AFTER YOUR...

AND YOU LET HIM?

YOU LET HIM GO AFTER A DEFENSELESS OLD WOMAN? YOU COWARD!

SPIDER--
PETER--

--FORGET HIM! YOUR AUNT'S WHAT'S IMPORTANT!

...THROAT...

...CRUSHING MY...

THUD

MAY'S... MAY'S AT AVENGERS TOWER.

WE'LL CALL ON THE WAY--

PETER...

...I DIDN'T HAVE ANY CHOICE. FOR NORMIE'S SAKE. YOU UNDERSTAND THAT, DON'T YOU?

...

...I WOULDN'T BE HERE WHEN THE *POLICE* SHOW UP, LIZ...

"...YOU DON'T WANT TO BE MISTAKEN FOR A *VILLAIN.*"

THE COPS ARE ON THEIR WAY TO CLEAN UP AT ALLAN'S, RED'S STILL AT THE HOSPITAL UNDER PROTECTIVE CUSTODY, AND NO ONE'S ANSWERING AT THE TOWER.

I SWEAR. if he's done ANYTHING to her...

...if she's ANYTHING but safe and sound...

HERE WE ARE, PETER! PIPING HOT, RIGHT OUT OF THE OVEN!

AW, THANKS, AUNT MAY, YOU'RE THE BEST!

AND I CAN'T WAIT TO CHOKE THE LIFE FROM YOUR WITHERED BODY, YOU OLD CRONE.

...

HOW ARE THEY, PETER? AS *YUMMY* AS EVER?

ARE YOU KIDDING, AUNT MAY? THEY'RE DELICIOUS. I LIKE HOW YOU PUT IN SOME...*ALMOND?* IS *THAT* WHAT I'M TASTING?

LOOK AT ME, I'VE ALREADY EATEN *FIVE*...

GOOD BOY.

ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU ONLY NEEDED TO EAT *ONE OR TWO,* AT THE MOST.

...

P-PARDON?

YOU'LL BE INTERESTED TO LEARN THAT PETER'S UNCLE BEN COULDN'T GO TO SLEEP WITHOUT MAKING SURE THAT EVERY SINGLE DOOR AND WINDOW IN OUR HOUSE WAS *LOCKED* AND *DOUBLE-LOCKED.*

AND THAT PETER'S FAVORITE COOKIES ARE *GINGER-SNAPS* AND THAT HE *HATES* OATMEAL RAISIN. (YES, EVEN MINE.)

AND THAT MY FRIEND EMILY POLLACK HASN'T ORDERED YARN FOR ME IN TEN YEARS... SINCE SHE RETIRED TO FLORIDA, THE DEAR.

YOU...YOU WERE *TESTING* ME? THE WHOLE TIME?

HEAVENS, NO. I WAS *CONFIRMING.* I SUSPECTED YOU WEREN'T PETER ON THE ELEVATOR RIDE UP. AFTER ALL...

...WHAT KIND OF *MOTHER* WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO TELL HER SON FROM AN IMPOSTER? BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT I *AM* TO PETER...

...I'M SORRY, WHICH ONE ARE YOU? THE CHAMELEON? MYSTERIO? A NEW ONE?

NO, I'M THE *CHAMELEON* ALL RIGHT. AND YOU'RE...

...YOU'RE...

...WHAT DID YOU *DO* TO ME?

DEAR ME. HAVEN'T YOU FIGURED IT OUT YET?

THAT ALMOND YOU...DETECTED? I WASN'T BEING ***CREATIVE*** WITH MY RECIPE, THAT'S JUST WHAT ***ARSENIC*** TASTES LIKE: ALMOND. IN OTHER WORDS...

GOTCHA!

YOU...

YOU...

THUNK!!

MERCY. WHAT ***WERE*** YOU GOING TO CALL ME, I WONDER...

BACK OFF, CHAMELEON.

BACK.

THE HELL.

OFF!

HELLO, PETER.

YOU KNOW I DON'T MIND WHEN YOUR FRIENDS *DROP BY* FOR A VISIT, BUT I *WISH* YOU'D GIVE ME SOME NOTICE...

UHMMMM...WHY DOES IT SUDDENLY FEEL LIKE THAT TIME YOU TOOK ME TO THE MOVIES AND WE MISSED THE FIRST TEN MINUTES OF *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK?*

AUNT MAY, THE MOLTEN MAN TOLD ME THAT-- THAT--

--I MEAN, WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED HERE?

I BAKED THE CHAMELEON COOKIES.

TO SPICE THEM UP, I ADDED ALMOND EXTRACT AND CRUSHED IN SOME OF THOSE *PILLS* MARY JANE TAKES WHENEVER SHE CAN'T SLEEP.

YOU MEAN... AMBIEN?

YOU *DRUGGED* THE CHAMELEON WITH MJ'S *AMBIEN?*

SHE KEEPS IT IN THE KITCHEN CUPBOARD, YOU KNOW...

SHEESH. REMIND ME TO NEVER...NEVER...

PETER? ARE YOU...?

...

I ***HATE*** THIS. I ***HATE*** WHAT I'VE DONE TO US.

I'VE MADE YOU AND MJ ***TARGETS.*** TAKEN AWAY WHAT ***LITTLE*** SEMBLANCE OF A NORMAL LIFE WE HAD. GOD, IF THE CHAMELEON HAD ***HURT*** YOU OR...

...OR ***WORSE...***

THERE, THERE, PETER. WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS. WE ALWAYS DO...

NOT ALL OF US, AUNT MAY. NOT ALWAYS...

RKER

WA

THE DEADLY FOES OF PETER PARKER

PART THREE OF THREE